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ABSTRACT

A psychologist on the staff of a research preschool in Chicago found that contact with black community leaders was essential to the success of the project. Specific questions dealt with the proper focus of research and the use of research funds in the community. This essay presents the research psychologist's views concerning the Negroes' questions about research and the public's growing disenchantment with research. It is recognized that the research enterprise itself has engendered problems, deriving from intervention-evaluation projects, basic research studies, and research "oversell." Intervention research poses problems of goals, methodologies, validity of findings, replicability, and the change and confusion in the researcher's role as the program progresses. The difficulty of explaining basic research issues to the people involved is discussed, and professionals are encouraged to resist the tendency to oversell the purposes and probable outcomes of research. Considering the context of social change in which these issues are raised, researchers are urged to be aware of their values and goals for research and to communicate these honestly to black people. In sum, negotiations between researchers and community are considered a means to acceptance in the host community and should form the basis of valid research designs. (DR)

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RESEARCH IN A BLACK COMMUNITY:

FOUR YEARS IN REVIEW

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RESEARCH IN A BLACK COMMUNITY:

FOUR YEARS IN REVIEW

From 1965 to 1969 the author was involved as a full-time research psychologist in a preschool project on Chicago's Westside. This essay is based on the experiences of those four years. It is essentially a personal statement about research, and about one group of researchers working in one black community. However, both the experiences and the formulations about them are applicable to other people and locations.

This material was originally prepared for presentation at a Symposium on research in black communities. It attempts to state some of the issues about research which black people are raising and it offers some ideas about the contributions of researchers to the declining enchantment with research. A larger social context within which the issues may be considered, and some possibilities for negotiating future research are projected from the vantage point of a child development researcher who is interested in problems of poverty, minority group status, educational innovation, etc.

In recent years, research interests in the problems of disadvantaged, poor, black children have mushroomed. Along the way, occasional questions were raised about the motives, methods and rewards of researchers who studied black people, as well as about the social utilization of research findings. More recently, the few voices have become a chorus. Challenges and prohibitions to research in black communities can no longer be dismissed as revolutionary rhetoric.

Many of the investigators who have studied the problems of disadvantaged

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[1] Society for Research in Child Development, Santa Monica, California, 1969.

children are not unlike the members of our group from the Institute for Juvenile Research, who, with a substantial grant from the Kenneth F. Montgomery Charitable Foundation, opened a research preschool on Chicago's Westside in 1965. The location was front row center in many respects. We had four apartments which were converted for classrooms and offices. The apartments were part of a housing project designed for large families, which emerged as the most ineffectively designed housing development in the sity. The neighborhood was the site of confrontations with police in Summer, 1966, and it witnessed the burning of the business district (Madison Street) following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King in April, 1968. We began there with a program of preschool education, based on available descriptions of children's educational needs in such a neighborhood. We planned parent-education meetings, and a research program geared to evaluating the effects of our program and to furthering the understanding of underlying factors which contribute to learning problems. This action-research project began its planning phase early in 1965 under the leadership of Dr. Jay Hirsch, a child psychiatrist, and Dr. Marvin Brottman, an educator. The staff which they assembled was interdisciplinary, interracial and varied greatly in social class, education and prior experience. Discussions among our staff, particularly after the first six months of operation, paralleled and often anticipated the questions about research which we heard more regularly later on. The major concern was research responsibility. Initially the questions arose indirectly as "musings" but later many of the staff began to question the whole concept of research in black communities, rather than the credibility, relevancy or importance of individual projects. Black communities, through their representatives, have raised these questions only recently. In addition to our growing awareness of the social meanings of the research enterprise, we became aware of the tremendous impact of increased media coverage of news about black consciousness, black identity and black power. Furthermore, we could not

ignore the changes in people wrought by the death of Dr. King, and by violence and show of fire-power which threatened to consume our neighborhood. For many residents, the Westside became a visible, raging hell, and that terror gave them the impetus to change their views of themselves and of their children's futures. It was a time when many people decided to call a halt to "dreams deferred" [2] and to mobilize their energies toward achieving a different and better life for their children. The changes were not so subtle -- adults walked taller, children spoke freely, deference to white adults decreased. As these phenomena gained in prominence, we kept an ear to the ground, and we heard the rattle of death beginning for those who expected a continuation of an earlier era of ready access to research subjects, and easy negotiation for research projects. Our scientific objectivity was not unaffected. Like others who tried to remain somewhat objective, we found ourselves unable to silence troubling questions about the degree of relevance of work focused on the study of children's learning and on interventions with individuals or families rather than with schools, social institutions, political structures, etc. When one sees the possibility of one's life and work all going up in smoke, it is a time for looking deep within the soul and asking ultimate kinds of questions. (We still have more questions than answers.)

During our years on the Westside, we have learned a lot about children, a great deal about child-rearing styles and their impact on children's classroom behavior, a fair amount about preschool programming, casework innovations, teacher-training and community involvement. We have learned about the effects of testing procedures, and about ways children attract or repel adult interest. We know our findings have relevance to a population wider than the Westside

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[2] From the poem "Dreams Deferred" by Langston Hughes.

of Chicago, yet we face the future with many questions about research as a social phenomenon. We continue to wonder about the involvement of white researchers in black communities at this juncture in American history. We wonder about the social statement made by white visibility--by white people in positions of power and control. We find the clean logic we muster to rationalize about these issues devoid of the intensity with which they are encountered on both sides. We have raised our questions voluntarily, without pressure from the community. We have absorbed the ridicule of colleagues who accuse us of misguided liberalism, or of "running away." We have not, as it turns out, been much ahead of the times. It is now very difficult for anyone to begin or to continue research on Chicago's Westside without recurring and often non-negotiable challenges.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF RESEARCH NEGOTIATION

Community organizations, social agencies and governmental bodies have all been encouraging the development of local leadership in black communities. They have provided residents with opportunities to meet, to discuss ideas, and to formulate plans for programs with experienced "experts" from a variety of fields. Many local leaders have learned that there is no magic to be had, and that the wisdom of educated experts doesn't always surpass their own. Thus, local leaders have acquired wide experience from which to ask pertinent questions, and have likewise gained confidence in their own judgments. Despite all the efforts exerted in the direction of fostering community leaders, we still don't recognize the implications of such developments. Simply stated, the researcher is no longer an object of unexamined awe and respect -- he's another entrepreneur whose interests can and must be evaluated and subjected to negotiation. Challenge usually comes in the form of quiet demands, e.g., "tell us what you expect to learn, and what you will do to see that your studies

benefit us." For many years Black people have been courted by people who would solve their problems -- they have been less than enthusiastic about the "solutions" of the courtiers. They have learned that an individual's knowledgeability and competence must be accompanied by a capacity for exchange and collaboration with community residents to bring about mutual satisfaction or "results." For the community, there is a degree of pleasure to be gained by turning the screws on the researcher, since his traditional status and power are thereby short circuited. For many of us, these confrontations or negotiations become more personal than professional, focussing more on gut issues than role issues. To what extent <u>are</u> inviolability and remoteness prerequisite for effective research roles? Is it possible that we sometimes use methodologies as defenses against collaboration in social problem solving? Can we afford <u>not</u> to separate our roles as researchers from our roles as citizens? The present atmosphere of research negotiation reflects the tenor of social change in our midst which brings about a questioning of formerly accepted values, even those of research methodology. Since changes and transitions cause discomfort if not pain, and usually produce casualties, we need to view the present "cool" atmosphere as related to other phenomena in contemporary life. In this way we may be able to minimize the casualties, and the loss of valuable time.

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<u>SOME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED BY BLACK COMMUNITIES</u>

Not all of these questions have been raised in our own community, but they do represent a selection of frequently stated concerns in our own or in other communities with which we have had contact. They are real questions, not academic ones.

1. The volume of research far outdistances the changes in service. If research findings already available were converted into practice today, a

ten year halt to research probably would not allow time to catch up.

2. If money is scarce because of the war and other national priorities, funds should be allocated to programs of economic, social, medical and educational action. (By analogy, vitamin research is esoteric when people are starving for lack of food.)

3. If you want to do research, study white racism or study the institutions which inform our national life and which have given rise to the problems of black people in America. Why focus on black individual and family variables until there is greater understanding of black-white social issues and some headway in changing the structures which limit black development? No one denies the importance of individual variables which influence children's growth, we simply demand proportionate emphasis on the problems which effect the community as a whole, e.g., jobs, housing, rents, discrimination,etc.

4. If you want to study ghetto residents, can you agree to use your knowledge to influence the power structure? Will you use your status, and your experience to become a spokesman or will you go home to your suburb or your office, and be satisfied to make a living and a reputation from our misery?

5. We have accepted research just as we have accepted many other things we were powerless to oppose. Weneed now to focus on our strengths and our competencies. We must stop behaving AS IF we were defective. Your research is concerned with what is "missing." Are you interested in studying and enhancing our strengths?

PROBLEMS ENGENDERED BY THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

While it may have been impossible to forestall the current controversy about research with minority groups, it is clear that the research enterprise itself tends to generate porblems and to add fuel to the fire. Three of these problems are presented here for consideration since they seem to be the most

common. They are the problems deriving from intervention-evaluation projects, from basic research studies, and from research "oversell."

Problems in Intervention Research

Action or intervention research presumes to effect change in people or structures. It tends to make assumptions about what is "wrong" or what could be "better" than the present state of affairs. The service aspects of action projects appeal to participants who assume that the researchers know what they are doing, and that measureable gains will be forthcoming. Program directors, or researchers turned change-agents, tend to convey an air of optimism and a belief that The Program will be successful. Inevitably, interventions do not go exactly as planned, and evaluation procedures leave much to be desired. Minimal or qualified results are disappointing to both community and project personnel. Subjective acclamations of success, on the other hand, tend to petrify the intervention program, and it becomes difficult to modify or improve it.

Emotionally, both research and service personnel as well as program participants operate as if they had established a new social form with an existence of its own. There is an air of excitement about new programs, much like that associated with the opening of a new school. Not a few researchers get caught up in creation myths, and come to view themselves as having given birth to creatures which will live on forever as monuments to the importance of their life's work. It is amazing to watch objectivity dissolve when the labor pains of getting something started are rewarded by the delivery of a functioning organism. (If you don't believe this, ask some researchers for their picture albums of the "baby's" first year.) The wish to perpetuate what one has created seems rooted in primitive fantasies to which we are all vulnerable.

Specification of what a program really did, and evaluation of its effects are challenges not unlike wrestling with an octopus in the dark. As the action researcher wrestles with his program, trying to describe and evaluate it carefully, he inevitably plans changes for the next phase of the program. He may be convinced the changes are necessary, and may believe he has convinced his staff, his community (if that is necessary) and the office staff. Everyone talks as if indeed he had convinced them. What follows is an object lesson in resistance to change. People cling to the familiar, even if it was unfamiliar in the recent past. We have observed this phenomenon in many settings, and among people who could not be described as "rigid." We have concluded that there may be a greater need for consistency, predictability, and stability in poor black communities than in some other settings, since so much of life there is uncertain and Staff begin to feel the anxieties associated with ghetto life probably through their identification with residents, but also as a function of their dealings with stores, police, parking lots, etc. Keeping a viable research program operational requires Herculean efforts under these circumstances. It tempts one to compromises which would be anathema in the laboratory. Conflicts between methodological control and program flexibility consume energy much faster than they generate data. We concluded more than once that understanding the social process involved in field research is probably more important than the impact of intervention programs. The number of unanticipated problems makes it impossible to specify what a program is like from day to day, or what the findings might mean. Unfortunately, our research staff were located in the field with the program, so we were aware of day to day realities. Had we remained in the medical center research offices, we would have been spared the harsh facts --that our plans were approximated only roughly. Too much knowledge may be a dangerous thing. We still envy those who claim to carry out well-controlled field projects, but we suspect secretly that they

stay out of the field and have staffs who shield them from the harsh realities which influence the actualization of their research designs. A recent report of research in a large public school system, which set out to compare the effectiveness of reading instruction methods, with a suitably large sample of children, schools and districts, adequately padded to allow for the unexpected, seemed more successful in pointing out why any method of instruction is likely to run amok in the ghetto, rather than which is most effective. During that study there were significant changes in district superintendents, principals, teachers, teacher aides, committments to the project, etc. One can estimate the expected loss of subjects (students), but the losses in personnel trained to administer treatments is akin to having a large percentage of one's graduate students down with the flu in the midst of a time-controlled experiment, being conducted while the principal investigator is called out of town on family business. In other words, the black community's questions may have come at an appropriate time for many of us to question our methodologies, and the validity of our findings, to say nothing of the replicability of conditions, treatments, etc.

The last of the problems engendered by intervention research about which we wish to comment is the action researcher's potential loss of role clarity. The researcher who develops an intervention project usually becomes and administrator, at least to some degree. If he is to maintain control over the research, his investment in the project is usually considerable. To the extent that he assumes administrative responsibility, he becomes accountable to the community. To the extent that he becomes accountable, he must consider a whole host of potential and actual effects of his research on the subjects as well as on the community. He is usually sought out to participate in community committees, and while he may look forward to these activities as informative, he cannot remain an objective bystander indefinitively. Often he is asked to

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take a stand for himself and for his organization, and in the process he must consider the social implications of his presence, and the existence of his project within the community. There are some communities where the number of ongoing projects protects some of them from this level of intimate involvement. We would guess they will be in the minority. Among the questions he will probably ask himself, or be asked by others are some of the following. What is the nature, rate and self-propelling potential of the change he is introducing Are changes beneficial but unrelated to his specific goals, i.e., change in community organizational activity but little change in the learning skills of children in his program. If he recognizes social effects, which may proceed from his research, but in which he is not professionally interested, or which he feels unqualified to study closely, what does he do and how does he communicate this to the community?

In our preschool we were not unsatisfied with the gains of the children when we compared our results with those of other preschool research programs. However, we observed many problems in the children which we had not reached. Meanwhile, we became aware of our growing reputation in the community as a place where parents could come to talk with educated people on a first name basis, and where advice was dependable, and assistance unpatronizing. We also recognized that our efforts at establishing an organization of social agencies and schools were quite successful, and that professional people in the area sought our advice. The fact that we were a research group gave us some special status, and certainly there was nowhere in the neighborhood where so many "eggheads" and "shrinks" congregated. Our social and organizational activities were intended to be peripheral, -- part of an attempt to maintain ourselves in the community-- they were not our research focus. Nevertheless, we got socialized and lost the ivory tower mentality, by experiencing the

murkiness of social reality. We were convinced of the need for innovation, for evaluation, and for continued research. We were aghast at the cost in money, people, and energy which good social research consumes. The multi-dimensional complexity of a social field increases the risk of missing or misreading the signals and seriously injuring both the work and the relationships necessary for doing social research.

Basic Research Issues

Basic research, whether descriptive or experimental, tends to confuse anyone not immediately involved and even some who are. It is little wonder that we have difficulty explaining basic research to subjects, community representatives, or even program staff. Basic research in black communities has given rise to suspicion, some of it quite justified, much of it due to misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Baratz and Baratz, in the Spring, 1970 issue of Harvard Educational Review have called into question the racist bias of social research, claiming that most of the investigators in the field are concerned with social pathology not with health. In this writer's opinion they extend the interpretations of data far beyond their logical possibilities, and do much to buttress the growing resistance to basic research with black subjects. There is little question that the tide has turned from a heavy emphasis on intrafamilial, demographic and cognitive variables to social psychological, sociological, interpersonal/affective variables, and strengths or styles associated with black experience. As an example, Black people always questioned research on father absence, since they realized that physical versus psychological presence was hard to evaluate within the black urban subculture. They have witnessed arguments among researchers and others who disagree about the relative importance of individual variables.

Each of us has his own corner on truth, his own vision of what <u>is</u> or what should be. It is possible to argue for or against the relevance of most basic research studies. Questioning, challenging and clarifying are part of the research process. The same kinds of questions about basic research are raised by undergraduate students, by socially concerned psychologists and by minority group members. There is little specifically "black" about the challenges to researchers about the social relevancy of basic research work. In summary, basic research is difficult to explain, it is always open to challenge and/or misinterpretation, and we are at a stage in American history where research with human subjects is being attacked from many sides as impossible or irrelevant or both. The black community's resistance to participation in such research should be understood in this context.

Research Oversell

Many politicians and professionals concerned with children have conveyed unscientific optimism that "breakthroughs" would be forthcoming which would, in the American way, offer solutions to social probelms without undue cost -- we would discover the right drug or the right technology. We would treat the symptoms and the underlying problems would take care of themselves. The whole body would be rejuvenated when the symptoms were cured -- the poor would rise when their educational problems were ameliorated. Basic research was given more credit for its practical utility than was realistic. There was a hint of magic in the air about action research -- science would conquer, and major personal and social change, with the accompanying pain and frustration, would be unnecessary. While few investigators will admit to such naivete, it is difficult to deny it altogether. We wonder if researchers have oversold their potential contribution to solving social problems, and if in an attempt to generate an atmosphere receptive to research, they have

simplified both the purposes and probable outcomes of their studies. Scientific methodology has been widely acclaimed in our technological society --much like a liturgy whose privilege is unquestioned and looked upon with awe. It is difficult to clearly explain the limitations of research endeavors. When people (including members of Congress) expect more than they get, faith diminishes and acceptance often turns to rejection and hostility. "Minimal" findings don't "turn people on" and they sometimes feel they have "been had" when they are told of inconclusive or disappointing results. It is important to recognize that people who are members of minority groups have reason to suspect those who might "use them." Such groups come by their paranoia honestly, since betrayal, pain, and indignity often have been the outcome of their past involvements with soothsayers.

There is no doubt that some of the current resistance to research is a reaction to the "oversell." Could it have been prevented? We doubt that individual researchers could have countered the popular myths of the Great Society, although many will have to contend with reactions to the discrediting of these salvation myths.

THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Many of the issues raised in this essay are viewed best in the context of accelerating social change. The vivid memories of the turbulent sixties may dim with time, but there is little reason to expect a slower pace of change in the future. We live in an age which has encouraged in many people a belief in the possibility of freedom from pain, poverty, and human indignity, and a hope for authenticity in life, a fuller experience of humanness, an end to dreams deferred. This is also an age of affluence and achievement, in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It is

an age which engenders intense excitement at the same time as it engenders fear for the future of life on this planet. When questions about the meaning and conditions of life are voiced in the marketplace rather than in the seminar room, the student meeting or in private fantasies, a challenge to the credibility and relevancy of social research seems inevitable. That is where we are in 1970 ! Many of the questions about the future of human life, and the relevance of social research are unanswerable, but the tensions and frustrations they create cannot be ignored.

The proposal for a National Data Bank has aroused much anxiety, outrage and a number of emotions in between. These reactions to one research endeavor are similar to other reactions which have occured on a smaller scale. Questions about research with black subjects as well as about data banks, are indicative of a growing concern about treating persons as objects, with studying human characteristics without <u>explicit</u> consent of subjects, and and with studying social-cultural phenomena which group members consider unrelated to their concerns.

The researcher who has studied black people as subjects in his studies, and who wishes to continue similar work, must be ready to answer the questions raised earlier in this essay. Sooner or later, people or organizations in the host communities will ask some of these questions. It behooves him to think about his answers before he is called upon to respond, since there are no "right" answers, and a lot of "wrong" ones can result from too casual a response. It is my view that the questions are valid, and must not be dismissed as unimportant. To deny their validity is to avoid coming to terms with the changing posture of the black man in America. Scientifically, a wish to avoid these questions is akin to viewing the social field through blinders, and trying to make sense out of data without taking

the social context into account. On the other hand, there is danger in becoming so identified with the black experience and the black revolution that the investigator loses sight of other social phenomena which are also important. Research, in itself, is neither an exploitation nor a salvation. It is a search for answers to questions through disciplined inquiry, and it is therefore a necessary activity for a society which faces increasingly complex problems. Muzafer Sherif, in a 1969 paper, "On the Relevance of Social Psychology," emphasized the need for continued research about vital human concerns:

> Let me close this issue by suggesting that the great concern over human dignity and privacy can be served best if basic research discovers the exact conditions and processes underlying the manipulation of people toward deeds of blind obedience, unthinking conformity, hatred, and inhumanity to man. Denial of such scientific study amounts to reserving these problems as the exclusive domain of men of power, bent on using people for their own ends regardless of the cost in human dignity and even human life.
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> (American Psychologist, 1970, 25, p. 148)

It is crucial that investigators consider their research questions carefully, and choose to study problems which they judge to be important and which capture their interests rather than studying what is fashionable or lucrative. Poor people are very much aware that the war on poverty filled the pockets of many enterprising young professionals who took advantage of opportunities to put their brains where the money was. We need to emphasize, by contrast, the investigator's sensitivity to the social implications of his research, and to the possible risks of his findings being oversold to the public, used prematurely in formulating public policy, or used by individuals seeking sanction for repressive measures. Any investigator who chooses to work on problems which are of potential social interest must be aware of these unintended outcomes.

Must the researcher become a social activist? Should he? It seems to me that the answers to these questions are personal and very much related to the skills and inclinations of a particular investigator. There are many reasons pro and con. Social responsibility for one's work can be assumed in many ways, aside from active involvement Among them are support for worthy programs in their fund-seeking activities, free consultation to groups writing proposals, designing evaluation components for action programs, efforts to influence public decision-making by sitting on committees, writing letters, appearing to provide testimony, and by dissemination of important findings and observations through whatever media one can use well. For those who work within a university their work with students is potentially so influential, that if it is done well, the impact on subjects, on practice, and on future research will be considerable. Are there reasons for the investigator to moderate his involvement in the social situation within which he does his research? For many of us, the answer seems to be yes. Research activity requires a patient, analytic, skeptical approach, whereas administration, service, or action require a synthetic, optimistic, energetic, and momentary approach. Most people can do both, but they are seldom simultaneously effective at both. Whichever route or role he chooses, the researcher must be aware of the reference group with whom he identifies, the public to whom he speaks, and the goals he sets for himself in his work. He must be prepared to defend these choices to his students, his subjects, his colleagues, and his funding agencies. He can only effectively support choices which he has, <u>in fact</u>, made . Inherent in these choices are hierarchies of "publics" and of "goals." For those investigators who place community people at the bottom of their list of "publics" and social relevancy at the bottom of

the list of "goals," there is every reason to believe these values will be communicated to a host community. These values, honestly chosen may or may not be acceptable to a community which values competence and integrity over false assurances. On the other hand, the investigator who misrepresents his values in order to "con" a community does a great disservice to his colleagues as well as to the people he planned to involve in his research. It is very difficult for a new investigator to gain acceptance in a situation where another has been dishonest.

THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Negotiated research rather than accepted research will be the model for the future, not only in the black community but elsewhere as well. Investigators will be asked to state their questions, their purposes in asking these questions, and something about their methods and expected findings. They may be asked to design projects to answer questions for community groups, and in exchange be permitted to collect data for themselves. For the investigator who can be honest with himself and with a host community, things are improving rather than declining . The demand for exchange of ideas and services will be difficult for many to accept. The need for compromise will demand that an investigator know exactly how much his design can tolerate before it becomes useless. We will have to become partners with subjects in finding answers to researchable questions, able to give as well as receive, and willing to tolerate rejection of a particular proposal without giving up altogether. For investigators who have neither the skill nor the inclination to communicate with their subjects intermediaries may be useful,providing they are willing to negotiate those components of their studies which can be altered, or to add things which the host group is concerned about.

Human research without reciprocity is nearing its end, even with the college sophomore. Failure to come to terms with his subjects' just demands may cost the researcher both data and publication rights. He will modify his stance or retreat to the animal laboratory. Minority groups have more alternative ways to support or censure aliens in their midst than they believed in the past. They are not averse to contingency management, and in the long run the benefits in terms of more careful research probably outweigh the limitations. The Golden Age for educational and child development research is past. Federal funds are scarce, and government agencies are talking about cooperative research and cost-effectiveness. During this decade, those of us studying issues which are socially visible will have to become politically socialized and more professionally flexible. Otherwise we will have neither subjects nor funds -- and ideas alone will not sustain us for long.

From my perspective, I expect the anti-research climate now prevalent in many minority group communities (and among professionals who are concerned with them) will be short-lived. Those groups in which this atmosphere prevails should, in my opinion, be left alone until they have come to a decision about inclusion of research people and problems. Insistence upon doing research is hardly the best way to proceed. In addition, researchers need to be sensitive to institutional conflicts which may engulf them. Although a researcher may be well accepted by a host community and by a school system within which he collects data, he may find himself and his study in shambles if one of the schools becomes embroiled in conflict about community control, or any number of other issues. Social fields everywhere are less stable than they once were, and disruption of research is possible even when negotiations have been productive. This type of research crisis should not be viewed in the same light as resistance from the host community.

EVOLUTION OF KING CENTER -- AN EPILOGUE

Our circumstances at Henry Horner Preschool, later renamed King Family Center, were unique in many respects. We had become involved with action research out of concern with (1) the need for educational programs which would help young children and their mothers to prepare for elementary school, and (2) the need for research about the conditions which contribute to underachievement among lower class black children. We gradually became convinced that, despite the usefullness of early education programs and the importance of studying learning in young children, the problems of the black adult world were of greater social importance. As long as the adults in their lives felt relatively powerless, the children had little impetus to gain the skills which we considered evidence of "educational achievement." There was little in the world view of children or adults to make school performance meaningful for adult life. During this period of re-thinking our project structure, two of our black professional staff were debating with themselves about the appropriate application of their skills at this crucial point in black history. Both were exceptionally capable people, who were innovative, effective, and charismatic. Both had participated in research, but were more inclined to view the present climate as calling for social involvement rather than pensive research activity. These two lines of development led us to reevaluate our structure, which was essentially a research project with research funding. We reached a decision --not as easily as this brief description implies -- to seek new funding sources which would permit the establishment of a Resource and Demonstration Center to be operated by black professionals and advised by a Board of Directors

composed of community, business, and professional members. The W.T. Grant Foundation awarded a substantial grant for this purpose, and the Montgomery Foundation agreed to continue its support. This made it possible to consider separation from the research program of the Institute for Juvenile Research, and to plan for establishing the Center as an independent social agency.

The Center's present policy is consistent with its original goals, and the continuity of ideas is a tribute to the blood, sweat, tears, and good will of all involved in the transition. Research in the experimental and measurement form has been concluded. Programs are being developed with the intention of involving black people in planning their own futures and the future of the community where they live. A model of "Conceptual Research" is operative, in which programs are developed and conceptualized. Those which are effective will be made available to other groups who would be interested in applying and evaluating them more carefully. The staff believes that its greatest strengths are in the insightful innovation and conceptualization of programs and they view their contributions to be equally important to the generation of new knowledge as a more rigid concept of research.

The white research and administrative staff have gradually withdrawn from the King Center, although there has been no withdrawal of support for the ongoing developments, nor a withdrawal from concern with the research work begun there. Without planning for the conversion of a research operation into an autonomous community program, we managed to facilitate the creation of a vigorous, unique social agency which is responsive to the community, and which views itself as anticipating

social trends rather than following them. From the perspective of a researcher and clinician concerned with social change, the new style of King Center has been an exciting evolution, and a rich professional and personal experience.

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